



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## LORD BROUGHAM.

HENRY BROUGHAM was born in the house, No. 19, St. Andrew's-square, Edinburgh, in the year 1778. His father was a Westmoreland gentleman, of old Saxon family, who, while travelling in Scotland, became acquainted with Miss Eleanor Lyme, niece of Professor Robertson, the celebrated historian; he married that lady, and took up his abode in Edinburgh, in the house above named, where the subject of our memoir first saw the light. He was educated at the High-

thus alludes to Brougham—then a youth of nineteen or twenty:—"Had you any conversation with Brougham? He is an uncommon genius of a *composite order*, if you will allow me to use the expression. He unites the greatest ardour for general information in every branch of knowledge—and, what is more remarkable, activity in the business, and interest in the pleasures of the world—with all the powers of a mathematical intellect. Did you notice his physiognomy?"



HENRY LORD BROUGHAM AND VAUX.—FROM A DAGUERRETYPE BY BEARD.

school of Edinburgh, and at fifteen entered the University of the same city. Leonard Horner, who was an infant playfellow of Brougham on the pavement in St. Andrew's-square, was also his college contemporary, and augured great things of him. They were admitted members of the Speculation Society at the same time—a society in which Lord Lansdowne, Lord John Russell, Jeffrey, and many other distinguished men, first exercised their oratorical powers. Writing to a friend, Horner

Even at that early age Brougham's physiognomy must have been something remarkable. His is one of those singular faces which distinguish men from the common order; and a face like Brougham's does not change much. There is nothing soft nor beautiful about it; it is lowering, stern, hard, and almost repulsive; and yet with a wonderful softness about it when lit up by a smile. The chin is long and squared; the forehead high; the cheek cold and brassy; the nose, mouth,

and eyes seemingly huddled together in the centre of the face. No—Brougham never could have been good-looking, even as a youth; and therefore we wonder not at the query of Horner to his friend, "Did you notice his physiognomy? I am curious to know your observations on it."

Brougham, as a youth, did not seek the "primrose path of dalliance." From the first, he was a hard and energetic worker. Mathematics were his favourite study; and within a year after his matriculation at college he transmitted to the Royal Society a paper on *Porisms*, which was duly published in the "Transactions." Other papers followed, which led to a correspondence with foreign scientific men, conducted in Latin. His college studies over, Brougham travelled abroad, and on his return he settled down for a time in Edinburgh, practising at the Scotch Bar until the year 1807.

It was about this time that Brougham was brought into contact with Jeffrey and Sydney Smith, and the "Edinburgh Review" was founded. It is now known that the slashing review in that publication of Lord Byron's "Hours of Idleness," which stung the noble poet into writing his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," was the handiwork of Henry Brougham, written in his 29th year.

By this time, 1807-8, he had left Edinburgh and settled in London, where he was shortly after called to the bar by the Society of Lincoln's Inn, and engaged in extensive practice. His always indefatigable industry pointed him out as a man to be employed in business of emergency; and the selection of him to plead the cause of the English merchants against the Orders in Council, during the very year in which he settled in London, shows that he was already regarded as a man of mark in his profession. But he had, before then, been engaged in the House of Lords as counsel for Lady Ker, in the Roxburgh Succession case, in which he honourably distinguished himself.

It is said, however, that Brougham did not acquire his wonderful powers of speech without great labour. His first efforts, both as a pleader in the courts and as a debater in the Commons, were failures. But he had extraordinary pluck. He was never cast down nor disheartened. He only set to work again with renewed energy. His mind travelled into all subjects; and many languages were made tributary to him. After pleading in the courts all day, he would go home to study foreign politics at night, and forthwith publish the result in a brilliant pamphlet. He first publicly introduced himself to the political world in this way by a pamphlet, or rather book, entitled "An Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers."

Brougham, even from youth, seemed to watch his waking moments as misers watch their gold. Not one was allowed to pass without being laid under contribution. Hazlitt has said of him, "Brougham is, in fact, a striking instance of the versatility and strength of the human mind, and also, in one sense, of the length of human life. If we make a good use of our time, there is room enough to crowd almost every art and science into it. If we pass 'no day without a line,' visit no place without the company of a book, we may, with ease, fill libraries, or empty them of their contents. Those who complain of the shortness of life, let it slide by them without wishing to seize and make the most of its golden minutes. The more we do, the more we can do; the more busy we are, the more leisure we have." This seems to have been Brougham's practice—to be ever busy, and yet withal to have leisure! Once, when some one called upon Romilly to ask him to edit a book, he pleaded want of time, but said, "Take it to that fellow Brougham—he has time for everything."

In 1810 he entered Parliament as member for Camelford, a rotten borough belonging to the Earl of Darlington. Being a Whig and Reformer, he attached himself to that party, and, consequently, remained long in Opposition. Although, in an early number of the "Edinburgh Review," he had written an article somewhat hostile to the slavery abolitionists—then believing the struggle to be only one between the East Indian merchants and the West—he took his side by Wilberforce and Granville Sharpe, and spoke more than once on the same

side. But his first appearances were unsatisfactory; and it was not until he had been some time in the House, and delivered his speech on the Rights of Admiralty, that he began to excite attention. Horner speaks of this speech as a triumph, and predicts great things from his parliamentary career:—"I would predict," says he (and this was written forty years ago), "that though he may very often cause irritation and uncertainty about him to be felt by those with whom he is politically connected, his course will prove serviceable to the true path of liberty and liberal principles."

At the general election in 1812, Brougham contested Liverpool with Mr. Canning, but was defeated; and for four years he remained out of Parliament. During the interval, he laboured at the bar; he had an immense practice, and probably got through more work than any barrister of his day.

In 1816 Mr. Brougham was again returned to Parliament, this time for the borough of Winchelsea, and again through the influence of the Earl of Darlington. We find him immediately devoting himself to what has ever been one great object of his life—the advancement of Public Education. He moved for, and obtained, a select committee to inquire into the state of the education of the people in London and Westminster. He was appointed chairman, and gave a great impulse to the inquiry by his personal exertions. The committee, in its first report, stated that there were a hundred and twenty thousand children in the metropolis without the means of education; and that the numerous splendid charities provided in past times for the education of the poor were grievously mismanaged. Several further reports were made, and the result was, a commission of inquiry into Charity and Endowed Schools all over the kingdom.

Brougham's popular reputation was immensely increased in 1820 by the part he took in connexion with the "Queen's Trial," as it was called. He was the leading counsel on the occasion, her Majesty having appointed him her Attorney-General. His exertions in this cause were prodigious, and the speeches which he delivered on the occasion were perhaps his greatest efforts. The powerful orator succeeded. The government announced their determination to proceed no further with the "Pains and Penalties" bill, and the Queen was thus "acquitted." Such was the popular verdict at least. The public joy was without bounds. A spontaneous illumination in London for three successive nights followed the announcement of the triumph of the Queen's cause. The witnesses for the prosecution were burnt in effigy again and again; the newspaper offices which had taken part against the Queen were mobbed; and Brougham, Denman, and their coadjutors became the idols of the nation. There could be no doubt of the disinterestedness and courage of Brougham and Denman on this occasion. By exposing themselves to the displeasure of the court and government, they shut themselves out from official advancement in their profession—not only in that reign, but in the reign that was to succeed—for the Dukes of York and Clarence were both arrayed against the Queen and her cause. Brougham and Denman, however, could both afford to wait; they suffered for a time, it is true, but they both ultimately earned the lofty position and reward to which their splendid merits so well entitled them.

Brougham continued his labours in the House of Commons, devoting himself chiefly to commercial subjects, Foreign Policy, Negro Emancipation, and National Education. Throughout life he has been a friend to the oppressed of every class, and his eloquence has on many occasions rendered valuable aid to the cause of freedom. In 1820 he introduced a bill to provide gratuitous education for the poor of England and Wales, but it met with such determined hostility from the clergy, that he abandoned it in despair. In 1823 Mr. Canning took office, and it was rumoured, that he who had heretofore been friendly to the Catholic claims, now intended to make sacrifice of the cause. Some words which he had let fall in debate had been construed in this light, and the friends of the Catholic claims unitedly fell upon him as a renegade.

On the night of the 17th of April, a debate occurred upon

a petition presented in favour of Catholic Emancipation, in which Burdett, Tierney, and Brougham all spoke vehemently against the minister. Brougham's speech was the most severe. At the outset he was hesitating, disjointed, and somewhat rambling, as is his wont in opening up a subject. He cited instances of the humiliation of genius at the throne of power, and of dereliction of principle for the sake of office; he went on accumulating a cluster of such illustrations, and then, growing in vehemence, and increasing in rapidity of utterance, he glared his eye and pointed with his finger, to make the aim and direction sure. Canning sat in constrained silence, obviously ill at ease, writhing his body to this side and that, as if to find some shelter from the storm. The most perfect stillness hushed the House; every member held his breath; and it is said that, in one of the pauses of Brougham's speech, a clerk let fall a pen on the floor, the sound of which was audible in the far gallery. But on went Brougham; his stiffness and awkwardness clean gone, every feature working with excitement; and down came his terrible accusation of Canning, "that his acceptance of power had been the most monstrous truckling for office that the whole history of political tergiversation could present."

At length Canning could endure no longer. His prudence left him, and starting to his feet, his cheeks flushing, his nostrils quivering, and his eyes almost glaring, he exclaimed—"I rise to say that that is false!" There was dead silence for a few moments, and even the Speaker seems to have been taken by surprise. At length he broke the silence by expressing a hope that the Right Honourable Secretary would withdraw the expression. He refused to retract "the sentiment," and Mr. Brougham to withdraw the imputation. But at length, after "explanations," and with the aid of friends, the quarrel was composed, and Brougham and Canning afterwards shook hands in the House.

In the year 1823 we find Brougham co-operating with Dr. Birkbeck in the foundation of the London Mechanics' Institute; and in 1825 he was exerting himself to establish a University in London, in which he ultimately succeeded. Indeed, the University of London, of which he seems to be the permanent Lord Rector (though not called by that name), was mainly founded through his untiring exertions. About the same time (in 1825) we find him engaged in another movement for the Popular Education of the masses—namely, the establishment of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, the object of which was to prepare, and circulate among, the working classes cheap books and treatises of a much higher character than had formerly been accessible to them. The "Penny Magazine" among the first of the higher-class cheap periodicals, sprang out of this movement; and unquestionably this and the other admirable publications of the Society gave an impetus to the cause of popular education, of which England is still reaping the benefits.

King George died, and was succeeded by his brother William; on which a general election took place in 1833. Political feeling ran high at the time; the Reform movement was acquiring power; and it had been considerably increased by the revolutionary events which had occurred in France. Brougham was looked upon as one of the greatest men among the Liberal party; and, in proof of the estimation in which he was held, he was invited to stand for the largest constituency in England—that of Yorkshire. His electioneering canvass of that county is spoken of as something quite extraordinary and unprecedented. The district to be canvassed was of great extent, and no candidate had before ventured upon a personal canvass as Brougham did. He devoted about a fortnight exclusively to the work, during which he travelled by night and day: he had relays of horses at intervals, stopping at all the chief towns and large manufacturing villages, where he appointed meetings of the electors—in schools, chapels, and public rooms; and these he addressed, some at cock-crow in the morning, others in the forenoon, at mid-day, in the evening, and, in some places, the people assembled at midnight to receive and hear him. He travelled many hundreds of miles in the course of this canvass, sleeping

little and talking enormously. The canvass was a triumph; and Brougham was returned the representative of the largest constituency in England: he himself said that he had thereby arrived at the pinnacle of his fame.

But he went higher yet. A Reform ministry came in, and it is said the Mastership of the Rolls was offered to Brougham, but declined; and his name shortly appeared in the list of the new ministers as Lord Chancellor. We are not about to describe his acts or conduct in that high office. Perhaps more are disposed to blame than to vindicate him while in power. O'Connell used to say that he considered himself "the best-abused man in Europe;" but Brougham shared with him in this honour, if such it be. His appearance in their Lordship's House was dreaded as a spectre of revolution; and certainly he disturbed the equanimity of the debates in the Upper House by occasional extraordinary displays of his peculiar oratorical powers. He was Henry Brougham still, though now a Lord. The nature of the man was unchanged, and he continued the same restless, indefatigable, hard-working, versatile genius that he had ever been. Take an instance. He was sworn in Lord Chancellor at twelve o'clock, and at six o'clock of the same day he had laid on the table a bill to reform the abuses of the Court of Chancery. In the capacity of Lord Chancellor, he got through an enormous amount of work, and cleared off in a wonderfully short time the long arrears of business which had accumulated under Lord Eldon. Lawyers said he was hasty and impetuous in his procedure; and not always sound in his judgments—one of which was reversed by the King in Council. Indeed, the satirical remark was made of him by an eminent lawyer, that "if his Lordship knew a little law he would then know a little of everything." But he was doubtless of great use, and the English are now profiting by his labours in Law Reform—especially in the Law of Debtor and Creditor, and in the Law of Bankruptcy. He also originated the excellent County Court system, his object being "to bring justice home to every man's door."

But Lord Brougham was felt to be a man who did not work well in harness. He was constantly leaping over the traces. So, when a change of ministry took place, and a new Liberal ministry was appointed, Lord Brougham was not included. Since then, his career has been pronounced to be somewhat erratic; but he has held by his early principles, though he may not have chosen to take the particular course prescribed by the party of the time. His mind is of too original and eccentric a cast to allow him to follow quietly in the track of a party: and, consequently, no party relies upon him. On that fruitful topic, however, we shall not venture to dilate.

It remains for us to say a few words on his lordship's career as an author and a philosopher. His optical discoveries and discourses have won him an honourable name in France. He has contributed several able treatises to the publications of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge; that upon the "Pleasures, Objects, and Advantages of Science," is one of his best, and is most popular, simple and clear in expression, and exceedingly interesting. His work on "Political Philosophy," written for the same society, is a very able book, but little known. On his loss of office as Lord Chancellor, he devoted some portion of his leisure to the illustration of "Paley's Natural Theology," and he afterwards published a valuable Treatise, originating in conversations with Lord Althorp, on the same subject. Since then, he has published two series of "Lives of Men of Letters and Science, in the time of George III.," which have had an extensive circulation, and been deservedly admired. But his greatest work, unquestionably, is the Edition of his Speeches which he has himself corrected and published. That work will be his best monument; forming, as it does, a collection of the finest master-pieces in modern oratory. It is in this work that posterity—while it will, happily for him, have lost the record of his weaknesses—contemplating the value of his services, will place him amongst the foremost men and greatest benefactors of his age and country.